

3. (Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein [the step of] determining whether a service unit is idle comprises [the step of] checking the hook status of all of the lines of the service unit.

4. (Amended) The method of claim [2] 3, wherein [the step of] checking the hook status comprises [the step of] checking the status of the lines each time a line goes from off-hook to on-hook.

5. (Amended) The method of claim [2] 3, wherein [the step of determining] checking the hook status of all of the lines comprises [the step of] periodically checking the status of the lines.

Please add the following new claims:

6. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein determining whether a service unit is of a type that can be powered down comprises determining the services provided by the service unit.

7. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein determining whether a service unit is of the type that can be powered down comprises determining whether the channel units of the service unit support plain old-fashioned telephone service.

8. (New) The method of claim 2, wherein powering down the service unit includes disabling a transmitter of the service unit.

9. (New) The method of claim 2, and further comprising transmitting an idle pattern upstream when the service unit is powered down.

10. (New) The method of claim 2, and further comprising:
detecting the powering down of a service unit at the head end of the telecommunications system; and

transmitting an idle pattern upstream when the service unit is powered down.

11. (New) A head end controller that controls a plurality of service units in a telecommunications system with a multi-carrier transmission scheme, the head end controller comprising:

a channel manager that determines whether a service unit is of a type that can be powered down, and that determines whether a service unit is idle;

a logic circuit, responsive to the channel manager, that is operable to generate control messages for the plurality of service units so as to power down an idle service unit when it is of the type that can be powered down; and

a modem, communicatively coupled with the logic circuit, that transmits the control messages to the plurality of service units.

12. (New) The head end controller of claim 11, wherein the channel manager determines whether the service unit is idle based on a hook status of lines associated with the service unit.

13. (New) The head end controller of claim 11, wherein the channel manager determines whether the service unit is of the type that can be powered down based on a type of service provided by the service unit.

14. (New) The head end controller of claim 11, wherein the logic circuit causes an idle pattern to be transmitted upstream when a service unit is powered down.

15. (New) A service unit for use with a communication system that transmits signals with a multi-carrier transmission scheme wherein a transmission channel is divided into a number of subbands each subband including a number of payload channels and a control channel, the service unit comprising:

a modem that is tunable to receive telephony and control signals on a subband of a transmission channel;